

LATINO DATA PROJECT

HISPANIC CITIZENSHIP, REGISTRATION, AND VOTING PATTERNS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE DURING THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Prepared by the

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Hispanic Citizenship, Registration, and Voting Patterns
in Comparative Perspective
during the 2000 Presidential Elections

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With the conclusion of the 2004 presidential elections, and indications that the Hispanic vote for George W. Bush was higher in percentage terms (43%) than during the 2000 elections (31%), it is instructive to examine available state data on Hispanic voting patterns for 2000. These were released by the U.S. Census Bureau in February 2002 (see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting/p20-542.html>). Complete data by state for the 2004 elections will in all likelihood not be available until 2006.

The participation rates among potential Hispanic voters who were citizens of the U.S. 18 years of age and older were the lowest of any of the major racial/ethnic groups in the nation during the 2000 presidential elections as well as in the 2002 congressional elections. The results of the 2004 elections may very well have hinged upon whether or not these rates declined, remained the same, or increased. This study will focus upon the ten states with the largest potential Hispanic voting populations, citizens over 18 years of age, which accounted for nearly 85% of all voting age Hispanics in 2000. These are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Hispanic Populations 18 Years of Age and Over in Ten Largest States, 2000 (in thousands)

STATE	Hispanic Population 18 and over	% of all Hispanics 18 and Over
CALIFORNIA	6,514	30.2%
TEXAS	4,414	20.4%
FLORIDA	2,162	10.0%
NEW YORK	1,706	7.9%
ARIZONA	910	4.2%
ILLINOIS	771	3.6%
NEW JERSEY	583	2.7%
NEW MEXICO	484	2.2%
COLORADO	478	2.2%
NORTH CAROLINA	255	1.2%
Sub Total	18,277	84.6%
UNITED STATES	21,598	100.0%

Source: Census 2000

The citizenship rates among voting-age Hispanics in each of these states are significantly affected by the national components of these populations. States with older, established Hispanic populations and with fewer recent migrants have higher rates of citizenship than states with more recent migrant national groups. In particular Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who are citizens were heavily concentrated in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Illinois. Puerto Ricans and Cubans who were citizens were heavily concentrated in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. Although California has a large Mexican and Mexican-American community who are citizens, it is also a state with a large number of recent adult non-citizen Mexican and Central American migrants. North Carolina, the tenth largest state with a Hispanic population of over 18 years of age has the lowest percentage of citizens, nearly 33%. This is because most adults, including Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, are more recent non-citizen immigrants.

Table 2: Numbers of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban, and Total Hispanic Populations of Ten States

	Total Hispanic Population	Mexican	%	Puerto Rican	%	Cuban	%
California	10,969,132	8,600,581	78.4%	137,111	1.2%	70,623	0.6%
Texas	6,670,122	5,179,899	77.7%	70,393	1.1%	27,034	0.4%
New York	2,865,016	250,217	8.7%	1,047,866	36.6%	62,753	2.2%
Florida	2,680,314	358,123	13.4%	481,337	18.0%	846,080	31.6%
Illinois	1,529,141	1,154,552	75.5%	155,328	10.2%	18,742	1.2%
Arizona	1,295,317	1,083,524	83.6%	18,364	1.4%	5,100	0.4%
New Jersey	1,116,149	101,471	9.1%	369,231	33.1%	78,995	7.1%
New Mexico	765,610	341,313	44.6%	4,150	0.5%	2,759	0.4%
Colorado	735,099	458,847	62.4%	13,772	1.9%	3,552	0.5%
North Carolina	372,964	239,566	64.2%	32,181	8.6%	7,569	2.0%

Source: Census 2000, SF4

Table 3 indicates citizenship rates among Hispanic-origin populations who are 18 years of age and older and thus eligible to vote. These states are ranked by the highest percentage of Hispanic populations eligible to vote in 2000 to the lowest.

Table 3: Citizenship Rates Among Hispanic Populations 18 Years of Age and Over in Ten Largest States, 2000 (in thousands)

STATE	Hispanic Population 18 + Years of Age	Total Hispanic Citizens 18 +	% of Hispanics 18 + Who are Citizens
NEW MEXICO	484	426	88.0%
COLORADO	478	349	73.0%
TEXAS	4,414	3,173	71.9%
ARIZONA	910	616	67.7%
NEW YORK	1,706	1,077	63.1%
NEW JERSEY	583	346	59.3%
FLORIDA	2,162	1,265	58.5%
CALIFORNIA	6,514	3,489	53.6%
ILLINOIS	771	400	51.9%
NORTH CAROLINA	255	84	32.9%
UNITED STATES	21,598	13,159	60.9%

Source: Census 2000

Again, states with higher percentages of citizens eligible to vote were those with fewer numbers of more recent migrants.

We now turn to voter registration and participation rates. Table 4 indicates that voter registration rates among Hispanic citizens over 18 years of age were under 60% nationally and ranged from a low of nearly 37% in North Carolina to almost 66% in Illinois. Although participation rates among registered voters were nearly 80% nationally and over 70% in every state except Texas (68%), because voter registration rates were low, the actual participation of

Hispanic citizens over 18 years of age in the 2000 elections was below 50% nationally. As we will see below, this was the lowest among the three major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.: whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. Only 27.5% of all Hispanic residents of the U.S. over 18 years of age, citizens and non-citizens, voted.

Table 4: Hispanic Citizens 18 + Registered to Vote and Who Voted in the 2000 Elections (in thousands)

STATE	Total Hispanic Citizens 18 +	Total Hispanic Citizens 18 + Registered to Vote	% of Hispanic Citizens Registered to Vote	Total Hispanic Population 18 + Who Voted	% Total Hispanic Citizen Population 18 + Who Voted	% Hispanic Citizens 18 + Registered Who Voted	% of All Hispanics, Citizens and Non-Citizens 18+ Who Voted
CALIFORNIA	3,489	1,919	55.0%	1,597	45.8%	83.2%	24.5%
TEXAS	3,173	1,905	60.0%	1,300	41.0%	68.2%	29.5%
FLORIDA	1,265	802	63.4%	678	53.6%	84.5%	31.4%
NEW YORK	1,077	603	56.0%	502	46.6%	83.3%	29.4%
ARIZONA	616	304	49.4%	247	40.1%	81.3%	27.1%
ILLINOIS	400	262	65.5%	218	54.5%	83.2%	28.3%
NEW JERSEY	346	212	61.3%	179	51.7%	84.4%	30.7%
NEW MEXICO	426	239	56.1%	191	44.8%	79.9%	39.5%
COLORADO	349	199	57.0%	158	45.3%	79.4%	33.1%
NORTH CAROLINA	84	31	36.9%	22	26.2%	71.0%	8.6%
UNITED STATES	13,159	7,546	57.3%	5,934	45.1%	78.6%	27.5%

Source: Census 2000

Table 5 compares Hispanic citizenship rates for the population 18 years of age or older, voter registration, and voting patterns. At the national level Hispanic citizens over 18 years of age had the lowest voter registration rate (57%) and the lowest percentage of citizens over the age of 18 who voted (45%) compared with Whites and African-Americans, although there were significant variations in the states with the largest Hispanic populations. In all states the percentage of Hispanic citizens who voted were much lower than for Whites. In California,

Colorado, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, and Texas the actual voting percentage of Hispanics who were citizens were significantly lower than African-Americans.

In critical states which shaped the outcome of the 2000 presidential elections such as Florida, New Mexico, and Colorado, a higher Hispanic registration and voting rate could have changed the results of the election. When they are released, the data for the 2004 election will be interesting to observe for comparative purposes in light of the fact that the Republican presidential candidate is estimated to have received 43% of the total Hispanic vote. These votes may have been the decisive margin of George W. Bush's victory in the three above states.

Table 5: Citizenship, Voter Registration, and Voting Patterns Among Major Racial/Ethnic Groups in the Ten States with the Largest Hispanic Populations

STATE	Race/Ethnic Group	% of Pop 18+ Who are Citizens	% of Citizens 18+ Registered to Vote	% of Registered Voters who Voted	% of Citizens 18 + who Voted
ARIZONA	Total	88.8%	60.1%	87.5%	52.5%
	White	98.5%	64.8%	89.3%	57.9%
	African-American	97.2%	49.5%	68.6%	34.0%
	Hispanic	67.7%	49.4%	81.3%	40.1%
CALIFORNIA	Total	80.2%	65.8%	88.0%	57.9%
	White	94.7%	70.9%	89.9%	63.8%
	African-American	96.3%	64.9%	84.0%	54.5%
	Hispanic	53.6%	55.0%	83.2%	45.8%
COLORADO	Total	93.6%	68.5%	83.6%	57.2%
	White	98.7%	71.0%	84.8%	60.2%
	African-American	95.7%	67.3%	73.0%	49.1%
	Hispanic	73.0%	57.0%	79.4%	45.3%
FLORIDA	Total	86.7%	69.9%	85.3%	59.6%
	White	96.5%	71.7%	86.4%	62.0%
	African-American	81.6%	66.3%	79.8%	52.9%
	Hispanic	58.5%	63.4%	84.5%	53.6%
ILLINOIS	Total	91.6%	72.8%	85.1%	62.0%
	White	96.8%	73.3%	84.2%	61.7%
	African-American	97.8%	76.2%	89.8%	68.5%
	Hispanic	51.9%	65.5%	83.2%	54.5%
NEW JERSEY	Total	89.3%	70.7%	87.4%	61.8%
	White	95.8%	73.2%	87.6%	64.2%
	African-American	90.3%	59.6%	87.9%	52.4%
	Hispanic	59.3%	61.3%	84.4%	51.7%
NEW MEXICO	Total	94.2%	63.1%	86.3%	54.5%
	White	98.0%	75.0%	90.1%	67.6%
	African-American	100.0%	51.7%	60.0%	31.0%
	Hispanic	88.0%	56.1%	79.9%	44.8%
NEW YORK	Total	86.5%	67.8%	87.0%	59.0%
	White	95.3%	70.9%	87.6%	62.1%
	African-American	84.6%	64.1%	88.1%	56.4%
	Hispanic	63.1%	56.0%	83.3%	46.6%
NORTH CAROLINA	Total	94.8%	69.7%	80.5%	56.1%
	White	98.4%	72.7%	82.5%	59.9%
	African-American	99.8%	63.2%	75.7%	47.9%
	Hispanic	32.9%	36.9%	71.0%	26.2%
TEXAS	Total	89.0%	69.0%	78.5%	54.1%
	White	98.5%	72.8%	80.7%	58.8%
	African-American	98.6%	70.4%	83.3%	58.6%
	Hispanic	71.9%	60.0%	68.2%	41.0%
UNITED STATES	Total	92.0%	69.5%	85.5%	59.5%
	White	97.8%	71.6%	86.4%	61.8%
	African-American	95.0%	67.6%	84.1%	56.9%
	Hispanic	60.9%	57.3%	78.6%	45.1%

Source: Census 2000